

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-31 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 3-8 are amended, claim 2 is cancelled, and claim 31 is newly added. Reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 2-8 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention.

With respect to claims 2, 6 and 7, the Examiner asserted that the language “a facing position with respect to said second principal surface” and “a non-facing position” was indefinite. Applicants have cancelled claim 2, and have amended claims 1, 6 and 7 to refer to a second position in which the magnetic flux that acts upon the paper non-passage area is not reduced. Applicants respectfully submit that such language is sufficiently definite, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph.

Concerning claims 4 and 5, the Examiner asserted that the term “thereof” was indefinite. Applicants have amended claims 4 and 5 by replacing the term “thereof” with “of said magnetic flux reduction section”. Applicants respectfully submit that such language is sufficiently definite, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph rejection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Nanataki et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 09-171889).

Applicants' claim 1, as currently amended, recites an image heating apparatus which includes, inter alia, an annular heat-producing member having an inner peripheral surface and an outer peripheral surface, a coil facing the outer peripheral surface that generates magnetic flux that acts upon the heat-producing member, and a magnetic flux reduction section facing the inner peripheral surface and attached to a rotatable core which is made of a ferromagnetic material. The magnetic flux reduction section reduces, of the magnetic flux generated by the coil, magnetic flux that acts upon a paper non-passage area. The magnetic flux reduction section is displaced between a first position in which the magnetic flux that acts upon the paper non-passage area is reduced and a second position in which the magnetic flux that acts upon the paper non-passage area is not reduced, by rotating the core.

Applicants have enclosed a computer-generated English language translation of Nanataki et al. with the present response, along with a PTO-1449 Form which lists the translation. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the translation, and confirm his consideration of the translation by initialing the PTO-1449 Form and forwarding an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 Form to Applicants. Should the Patent Office determine that a fee is necessary to have this translation considered, the Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Nanataki et al. discloses a heating assembly 1 which includes an induction heating element (fixing film) 6, a coil 4, a magnetic core 5, and a magnetic flux regulating means (shield) 7. See, e.g., Figs. 2 and 5, and the English language abstract of Nanataki et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that Nanataki's coil 4 does not face an outer peripheral surface of the induction heating element 6. Rather, Nanataki's coil 4 is disposed inside the induction heating element 6. See Figs. 2, 5 and 6 of Nanataki et al.

Applicants further submit that Nanataki's magnetic flux regulating means 7 is not attached to the magnetic core 5, and that the magnetic flux regulating means 7 is not displaced between a first position in which a magnetic flux that acts upon a paper non-passage area is reduced and a second position in which the magnetic flux that acts upon the paper non-passage area is not reduced, by rotating the magnetic core 5. Rather, Nanataki's magnetic flux regulating means 7 rotates independently of the magnetic core 5. See, e.g., Figs. 2, 3 and 5, and paragraphs [0048] and [0072] of the English language translation of Nanataki et al.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Nanataki et al. does not disclose an image heating apparatus which includes a coil facing an outer peripheral surface of an annular heat-producing member, and a magnetic flux reduction section facing an inner peripheral surface of the annular heat-producing member and attached to a rotatable core made of a ferromagnetic material, where the magnetic flux reduction section is displaced between a first position in which a magnetic flux generated by the coil that acts upon a paper non-passage area is reduced and a second position in which the magnetic flux that acts upon the paper non-passage area is not reduced, by rotating the core, as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1.

Thus, Applicants submit that the invention recited in Applicants' claim 1 is not anticipated by Nanataki et al., and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection and allow claim 1.

Applicants submit that claims 3-9, as well as newly added claim 31, are also in condition for allowance, in view of their dependency from claim 1.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

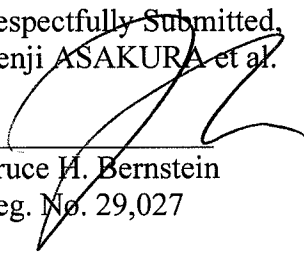
Rconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and believed to be appropriate. Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believe that they have done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Enclosures: PTO-1449 Form
English language translation of JP 09-171889